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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PINS](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: AL ANBAR: IRAQI SOLDIERS DISCUSS GOI,
SECTARIANISM, LOGISTICAL SUPPORT; HOLD DUAL LOYALTIES?

Classified By: Political Al Anbar PRT Leader James Soriano, reasons 1.4
(b), (d).

11. (U) This is a PRT Al Anbar cable.

12. (C) SUMMARY: Al Anbar PolOff met in early and mid-December 2006 with several Iraqi Army (IA) and Iraqi Police (IP) units and Coalition trainers December 4-6 based near Fallujah to discuss Baghdad violence, CF training efforts, GOI logistical support, and possible sectarian friction inside the IA and with the local Sunni Arab population. Some IA soldiers said that Baghdad,s sectarian fighting has increased tension in their units; others downplayed the effect. All of them stated that local IA and IP units remained largely dependent on CF for logistical support (except for food). One IA commander, whose unit will soon be reassigned to Baghdad, told PolOff that he had &big concerns about the loyalty of his men should they be ordered to engage militias. Units in Anbar are heavily comprised of Shia recruits from Baghdad and southern Iraq.
END SUMMARY.

LOGISTICAL SUPPORT LACKING

13. (C) Al Anbar PRT PolOff met with several IA officers December 4-6 in areas outlying Fallujah, where IA units jointly patrol with Marines. All expressed dissatisfaction with the level of logistical support from the Ministry of Defense. Apart from food (which is locally contracted), the officers said that due to MoD neglect, they depend almost entirely on CF for fuel, ammunition, and parts for vehicles. Local Iraqi police officers have difficulty to securing parts for their U.S.-supplied Chevy trucks. One IA Brigade commander said that he had not seen improvements since the appointment of MinDef Abdul Qader . He added that Iraq,s prior system)- before contracting became the norm, per Coalition policy)- had been better. The IA, he noted,had long been provided staples to meet its own internal needs without contractor complications.

14. (C) A wounded IA soldier, who was being treated at a Marine medical facility told PolOff December 9 that absent CF logistical support, the IA would &fail quickly.8 Another IA soldier being treated for IED wounds said that an increase in CF trainers would be welcomed. He noted that the current number of trainers assigned did not allow for enough joint patrols. NOTE: Ongoing shortfalls in ISF recruitment in Al Anbar, plus varying levels of IA and IP on duty at any given time, could complicate plans to match Iraqis with new influxes of CF trainers. END NOTE.

15. (C) Medical treatment represents a key area of ISF dependency on CF throughout Al Anbar Province. Coalition facilities remain the primary trauma system for ISF; 50 percent of surgery in the province is conducted on wounded Iraqi Army and police. The volume of IA/IP surgical loads is expected to rise as battle space is increasingly handed over to the IA. ISF physicians avoid Al Anbar work, due to the dangerous environment, inability to have a private practice in rural areas, and an effective murder and intimidation campaign. Ministry of Health control by Moqtada Sadr allies additionally complicates ISF medical support in Al Anbar Province. NOTE: Marine medical staff note that wounded IA and IP often refuse follow-on treatment at the medical city complex in Baghdad, fearing sectarian targeting.

16. (C) At the Karmah police station, IP officers noted similar levels of dependence on CF. One officer remarked, "the only help we get is from you Americans." He added that the district headquarters (in Fallujah) did not offer supplies, and there had been no resources provided from MoI in Baghdad. Another officer indicated, however, that one area tribal leader had been supportive of police efforts and had provided some funds; he noted that other principal sheikhs had fled to Syria or Jordan.

SECTARIANISM IN IA: MIXED VIEWS

17. (C) Two Sunni Arab IA officers stationed outside Fallujah offered critical views of the loyalty of their Shia soldiers. One said that he feared for his personal safety once the

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unit moved to Baghdad. He also criticized the sectarian attitude of the Shia soldiers under his command, noting that some of them have allegedly been involved in the mistreatment of locals. The officer stated that he believed some of his men would not fight JAM because "they are part of the militias." A brigade commander said that he had "big concerns" about possible dual loyalties within his unit, adding that the current sectarian composition of the government complicated matters. In contrast to the Sunni officers, Shia IA soldiers stationed in the Karmah area (a Fallujah suburb) showed little concern about the sectarian killings in Baghdad. NOTE: CF trainers relate that they have seen Moqtada Sadr posters on the walls of some IA units, living quarters, and varying levels of open expressions of support for Sadr, particularly among IA soldiers recruited from Baghdad, Sadr City. END NOTE.

18. (C) One CF trainer noted that the rise of violence in Baghdad has caused some units in his area to separate into Sunni and Shia groups. Some IA soldiers had to be watched closely in order to prevent them from abusing the local Sunni population. One Shia battalion executive officer, a Baghdad native, said if the CF departed Iraq prematurely, the country's Shia-dominated army would "march west to kill Sunnis." He favored the return of a strong man to lead Iraq, adding that the current government was too weak to address growing security problems.

19. (C) Two other IA officers complained about the perceived willingness of the GOI to "negotiate" with militias. They cited two examples: the killing of IA soldiers in Diwaniyah and policemen in Amarah earlier in the year. In both instances, they said government officials sought to placate militias versus confront them.

110. (C) COMMENT: The GOI's failure thus far -- whether due to lack of capability or by design -- to provide sufficient logistical support (fuel, food, equipment replacement, supply parts, vehicle maintenance) to Iraqi Army and police units in

Al Anbar continues to undermine CF training and ISF development efforts. Internal IA medical treatment gaps, predicted to grow, will likewise complicate ISF transition plans. Ongoing shortfalls in Sunni Arab recruiting in Al Anbar will further frustrate plans to increase the size of the IA and IP. Absent other ways to attract local Sunni Arabs to the IA, the only recourse would be to source Shia or other recruits from outside the province in the 1st and 7th IA Divisions. Sectarian influences in the IA will need to be watched closely, especially in units that are Shia-dominant and possibly redirected to Baghdad. Should those units be ordered to confront JAM directly, the outcome could add significant volatility to the already inflamed capital city.

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